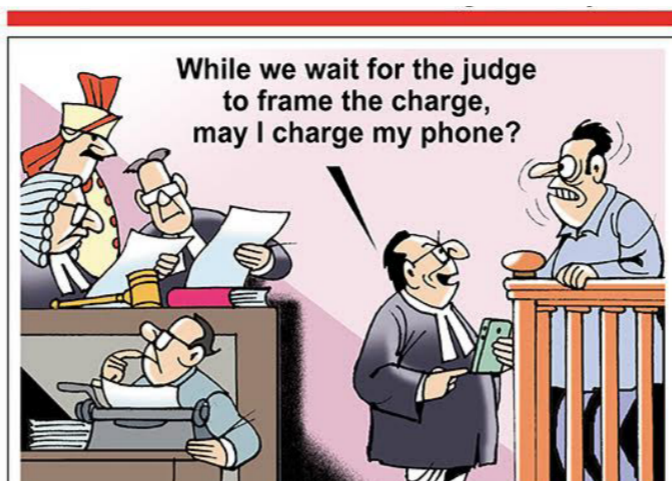


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NO HOLDS BARRED



**“We need leaders who will attack the problems facing our nation as soon as they can, however they can. I refuse to wait for the perfect solution before making a move. The hardest challenges require action that begins today, not tomorrow - forget long term.”**

# College Campuses Now Centres Of Conflict

BIKRAN VOHRA

**“In the past few weeks we have seen the flex of a new muscle. The millennial youth, hugely opinionated, demanding and armed with a startling sense of entitlement also has an eloquence that was missing in earlier generations. Thanks to the immediacy of information, data, and instant contact, this 200-million strong entity is not politically gun-shy and demands a say in the country's destiny.”**

**T**HE grotesque invasion of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus in New Delhi by a gang of hooligans hired ostensibly by political factions can be condemned till the nation is blue in the face but not much will happen. Whether there were 300 or 10 is moot. They were allowed to go about their viciousness. This sordid assault clearly had some sort of unspoken official sanction that allowed the police to stand by indolently and let the attackers have a field day.

While the probe and the belated wringing of hands will tango tunelessly for a few days with the low-key response from the centre to this aberration before fading into nothingness there are other offshoots of this black day in the Indian capital.

In the past few weeks we have seen the flex of a new muscle. The millennial youth, hugely opinionated, demanding and armed with a startling sense of entitlement also has an eloquence that was missing in earlier generations. Thanks to the immediacy of information, data, and instant contact, this 200-million strong entity is not politically gun-shy and demands a say in the country's destiny.

While traditionalist might cavil over this involvement in politics on campus and see it as an adolescent self-indulgence, that sell out has already occurred. Yes, in a perfect world students go to university to study and should concentrate on just that singular aspect. If they are diverted willingly into other avenues then the lump on the head is the physical manifestation of the cerebral brawling that marks politics. But it is not a perfect world and education is now rife with an engagement into public affairs.

The seepage of political leaning began decades ago and India is one of the few countries where youth are introduced between class periods to the political firmament in all its inglorious offshoots. You do not see the Tories and the Labour parties ruling the campus in Oxford and Cambridge. Nor do Republicans and Democrats have so much say in Cornell or Harvard or Penn nor are their college and university student elections controlled by such parties or worse, financed by them. It is almost like a state election.

It is unfortunate but true. In India the student elections are now an extension of the big boys and this invasion is now complete. There is no going back or sanitising a campus.

Outlawing political parties should have been mandated in the sixties. Now, any such move will break a wing before taking off.

While still on your parent's dime and in no way an earning member of society this potential vote bank has realised it is a political power and will now wish to be wooed and vilified. JNU has, since 2016 and the February 9 protests been a hive of political dissension against the centre, cheerfully risking the mantle of anti-nationalism. Freedom of speech was stretched to



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the limit four years ago and the rage and indignation in the fallout survives to this day and serves as encouragement to others.

It might well be said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) inherited this campus chaos and that it was the Congress party which allowed many a university of nationwide standing to deteriorate into violent and hostile entities. Aligarh, Banaras, Allahabad, Lucknow to name a few. The political stain then inked its way to the universities in the five metros and the top ten cities with students ready to strike and scream at every pretext and India's divisive political segments only too eager to spur them on.

And spurring them on is exactly what they are doing, risking a whole generation and its commitment to being orderly and contributory citizens. With each passing day, this massive swathe of energy-filled, testosterone-driven army is inhaling the toxic yet alluring

vapours of power. It will get worse. The BJP will now wake up to the fact that this is perhaps the largest vote bank in the next election. Indian youth have not been inclined to vote in the past. Hence they have never been wooed with that target in mind. Instead, they have been romanced only to foment trouble for the state governments and the parties who wear the mantle of power. Now, they get this extra dimension and it is dangerous.

Then the nexus between them and the pinnacle of authority will become even more conciliatory, pandering to the whims of the student whose persona we can assume will then turn malevolent and even more shrill. Having got onto this tiger India per se, be it government or parent, faculty or media, has no clue how to get off it without being mauled.

**E**VERY December 31st, a time-honored tradition brings people of all backgrounds and faiths together: making New Year's resolutions that won't last. It happens in business and government all the time, too - and on a much larger scale.

Business owners and managers often think they need a long-term plan, sometimes because a consultant told them that. And politicians often set goals for many years or even decades after they're gone from public office - without detailing interim targets that the public can hold them accountable for achieving.

It's easy to make long-term resolutions, and there's a certain escapism that comes with it. Why roll up your sleeves and get down to work when you could be mapping out an exciting plan for incredible levels of future success? It's tempting to let your mind fast-forward to the finish line, but projecting to step one hundred can limit your ability to execute step one. Successful athletes don't focus on winning the championship - or even on winning the first game. They focus on preparation.

Issues like climate change and gun violence can't wait for decades-long timetables.

We need leaders who will attack the problems facing our nation as soon as they can, however they can. I refuse to wait for the perfect solution before making a move. The hardest challenges require action that begins today, not tomorrow - forget long term.

That's not to say there's no value in thinking ahead. My advice is to conduct the following exercise:

Think logically and deliberately about what you'd like to do. Work out all the steps of the process - the entire what, when, where, why, and how. When you know it cold, write it out on a piece of pa-

## Act, Don't Get Bugged Down By Plans

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG | KHALEEJ TIMES

per. The act of writing forces you to confront questions you hadn't before. Address those things that you forgot, ignored, underestimated, or glossed over in your mind. Make sure your written description follows, from beginning to end, a logical, complete, doable path.

**“Don't let planning get in the way of doing. I once saw the classic cart-before-the-horse error during a presentation by a potential Bloomberg competitor. His slides had great-looking mock-ups of the company's future shipping department, showing conveyor belts shipping out thousands of the units. The problem? They hadn't yet built the first unit. And they never did.”**

Then tear up the paper - and get to work.

It's a good exercise in planning while also being a good reminder about what matters most. Real life doesn't follow big, carefully laid plans. Setbacks happen.

Surprises arise. Small opportunities lead to unforeseen bigger ones. Conditions and opportunities change in ways we can't anticipate - and that can change the direction of our work, and how we define success. You'll inevitably face problems different from the ones you anticipated. Sometimes you'll have

to zig when the business plan says zag. Plans are only as useful as your willingness to toss them aside.

A reporter once asked me what I thought Bloomberg had failed at, as opposed to the successes that

have allowed us to grow. I gave it some thought, then answered: "Nothing. But what we accomplished wasn't always what we set out to do." A failure leads to a new insight or idea that leads to new products and customers. We're flexible and adaptable. If we had stuck to a rigid plan, we might not be as big or as successful today.

Don't let planning get in the way of doing. I once saw the classic cart-before-the-horse error during a presentation by a potential Bloomberg competitor. His slides had great-looking mock-ups of the company's future shipping department, showing conveyor belts shipping out thousands of the units. The problem? They hadn't yet built the first unit. And they never did.

I've always focused on what's next, not what's way down the road. And I have always believed in playing as many hands as possible, as intelligently as I can - and working like crazy today, and getting up and doing it again tomorrow.

People have a lousy record of predicting the future, and they aren't much better at planning it out. By all means, set high goals and dream big. But then get down to work, and as the months and years pass, be ready to change course. The path to success is not a straight line, and the destination may be a place you haven't imagined. The best resolution is to get started on the journey now - and to charge ahead with deliberate speed.

Michael Bloomberg is three-term mayor of New York City and 2020 candidate for President of the United States